

# ***NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT FY09 REPORT***



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***Montana Fish,  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	2
FISCAL YEAR 2009 NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT .....	3
<b>Recreational Trails and Off-Highway Vehicle Grant Programs for Fiscal-Year 2009</b> .....	5
<b>Sikes Act Projects</b> .....	8
<b>FAS Internship</b> .....	9
<b>FWP Land Acquisition – Weed Inspection and Report Form</b> .....	9
<b>Noxious Weed Management Advisory Committee</b> .....	10
<b>Coordinator Update</b> .....	10
<b>Targeted Grazing Update</b> .....	11
CONCLUSION.....	13

### LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1: FY09 OHV Program Grants that specifically incorporated weed management methods.  
Table 2: FY 2009 Off Highway Vehicle Program Grants  
Table 3: FWP Sikes Act dollars spent on noxious weed management projects in FY09.

### LIST OF PHOTOS AND FIGURES

- Cover: The leaf beetle, *Diorhabda elongatea*, is the first approved biological control agent for saltcedar in the United States.  
Inside Cover : *Oberea erythrocephala* were released June 2009 along the Smith River Corridor by FWP and other critical partners.  
Photo 1: Orange hawkweed and other invasive hawkweeds are known to occur as far east in Montana as Gallatin and Wheatland counties.  
Photo 2: Gary Olsen, FWP Wildlife Biologist, explains the weed situation and management plan for the newly acquired Marias River State Park and Wildlife Management Area.  
Photo 3: Floaters enjoy the view of Marias River State Park and Wildlife Management Area during a June float coordinated by Pondera and Toole County Weed Districts.  
Photo 4: Contracted herbicide application at Dearborn FAS.  
Photo 5: Giant Springs State Park 2009 Weed Pull.  
Photo 6: Domestic sheep and goat grazing can be valuable weed management tools when applied appropriately.  
Photo 7: Grizzly bear track observed on Marias River State Park and Wildlife Management Area during a June weed tour/float.

### LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix A: FY09 Weed Management Summary  
Appendix B: FY08 Weed Management Summary  
Appendix C: Region 1 - FY09 Noxious Weed Management Report  
Appendix D: Region 2 - FY09 Noxious Weed Management Report  
Appendix E: Region 3 - FY09 Noxious Weed Management Report  
Appendix F: Region 4 - FY09 Noxious Weed Management Report  
Appendix G: Region 5 - FY09 Noxious Weed Management Report  
Appendix H: Region 6 - FY09 Noxious Weed Management Report  
Appendix I: Region 7 - FY09 Noxious Weed Management Report  
Appendix J: Parks Division SABHRS Documented Weed Expenditures  
Appendix K: Montana Weed Laws and Regulations  
Appendix L: Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Noxious Weed Management Advisory Committee Charter  
Appendix M: FWP Land Acquisition – Weed Inspection and Report Form

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) owns, leases, manages, or holds in conservation easement about 610 sites across the state and is responsible for noxious weed management on over 410,000 acres. These sites include 39 administrative sites, 373 fisheries sites, 94 state park sites, and 138 wildlife sites (FWP Land Book 2009).

In Fiscal Year 2009 (FY09), active integrated weed management activities took place on nearly 7,699 acres, and more than 1,500 biological control insect releases occurred on infested areas. FWP personnel also assisted counties with insect releases on lands surrounding FWP-owned or managed properties.

During FY09, FWP expended over \$378,388 for on-the-ground weed control efforts. An additional \$438,511.48 was spent on weed education and outreach, grants, and other weed management activities. These figures may not include all personnel time and effort spent on fieldwork, reporting, weed plan preparation, contracts, etc. As such, all expenditures reported in this document are minimum expenditures. Parks Division accounting records (SABHRS) of weed management expenditures are included in Appendix J. Regional breakdown of weed expenditures can be found in Appendix K. Because of the highly invasive nature of noxious weeds, FWP's annual weed control expenditures have been increasing and typically exceed proposed budgets.

Since completion of the Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan in June 2008, Fish, Wildlife and Parks staff have been working towards fulfilling the requirements of the plan and addressing the action items identified therein. The plan was developed to replace and supercede Regional Six-Year Management Plans, bringing continuity and consistency to agency weed management. Regional Implementation Plans are being developed during FY09/10 and will be periodically updated. Although each Region developed Environmental Assessments at the time initial regional Weed Management Plans were written, a new MEPA document/environmental review for FWP weed management related activities will be completed in FY10/11.

FWP owns and manages less than one-half of one percent (<0.5%) of all lands in Montana, yet spends over half of a million dollars annually, not including staff time, for weed management on FWP-owned and managed land. In addition to nearly \$816,850 spent under the authority of Fish, Wildlife and Parks' weed management program in FY09, a total of nearly four million in sportsmen's dollars was provided to private landowners through the Block Management Program for use in farm and ranch operations, which may include weed management activities. In FY09, FWP paid more than \$190,423 in Block Management Weed Incentive Payments to cooperators for private land weed control. In addition to FWP funding sources, 1.2 million dollars in federal trails project grant funding were available through FWP in FY09. Federal trails projects require weed management plans to be in place and frequently include a weed management component. An additional \$160,000 was made available for Off-Highway Vehicle Grant Projects that also contained weed management components. The Sikes Act resulted in \$34,100 in FWP funds being matched with federal funds for habitat improvements and weed management on federal lands in Montana.

In total, FWP had a potential fiscal-year impact of more than \$6 million state and federal dollars being made available for private and public land weed management and related activities.

## INTRODUCTION

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) owns, leases, manages, or holds in conservation easement about 610 sites across the state and is responsible for noxious weed management on over 366,000 acres. These sites include 35 administrative sites, 360 fisheries sites, 88 state park sites, and 127 wildlife sites (2007 Lands Book).

In Fiscal-Year 2009 (FY09), active integrated weed management activities took place on over 7,698 acres, and over 1,500 biological control insect releases occurred on infested areas. FWP personnel also assisted counties with insect releases on lands surrounding FWP-owned or managed properties. Typically, long-term weed control success is neither a rapid nor a readily observable development, yet FWP strives for long-term success and uses available tools to manage noxious weeds.



Steve Hillebrand, FWS

**Photo 1: Orange hawkweed and other invasive hawkweeds are known to occur as far east in Montana as Gallatin and Wheatland counties.**

For the majority of FWP sites, on-the-ground weed control is accomplished via contract with county weed districts or private contractors. At times, spraying is subcontracted through the counties with private contractors. To supplement contracted weed control efforts FWP utilized over 50 employees licensed by the Department of Agriculture for herbicide application at FWP sites in FY09. FWP also has a staff member assigned statewide weed management coordination duties as well as an Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator. The weed management coordinator assists managers with reporting weed management activities on FWP lands and acts as a liaison between FWP and other state agencies, county weed districts/boards, noxious weed control organizations, educators, and the general public.

How noxious weed management is addressed on FWP-managed sites depends on various factors. Some sites are groomed, such as mowed lawns, and do not require chemical application. Decisions are influenced by such factors as aesthetics, public occupancy, proximity to neighbors, potential weed seed transfer, and weed efforts of adjacent landowners. On other areas, such as expansive Wildlife Management Areas, weed

establishment is deterred through managing range and vegetative health with rest-rotation livestock grazing systems.

Sites like Fishing Access Sites require an exceptionally cautious management approach because they are inherently associated with water. Soil type, slope, riparian vegetation, water table, and proximity to surface water can limit the use of chemicals at these sites. Also, some of these sites are remote, poorly developed, and have poor access which prohibits regularly accessing the areas with spray equipment. On these types of sites, FWP must often rely heavily on biological control, a treatment method that is not always successful, and when successful, slow to result in visible improvement.

### FISCAL YEAR 2009 NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks' Fiscal Year 2009 (FY09) spans July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009. This report includes all contracted work and work performed by FWP staff that was billed and paid for during that time period.

During FY09, FWP expended more than \$378,338 for on-the-ground weed management efforts. An additional \$438,511 was spent on weed education and outreach, grants, and other weed management activities. Over the last three decades these numbers have been steadily increasing. This is due in part to increased herbicide and labor costs (inflation), improved record keeping, and increased on-the-ground control effort. These figures may not include all personnel time and effort spent on fieldwork, reporting, weed plan preparation, contracts, etc. As such, all expenditures reported in this document are minimum expenditures. Parks Division accounting records (SABHRS) of weed management expenditures are included in Appendix J. Regional breakdown of weed expenditures can be found in Appendix K. Because of the highly invasive nature of noxious weeds, FWP's annual weed management expenditures have not only been increasing but typically exceed proposed budgets.

In addition to FWP's direct on-the-ground control efforts, the Department participated in the following weed management related activities:

- FWP completed its Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan in June 2009. The plan was developed to replace and supercede Regional Six-Year Management Plans, bringing continuity and consistency to agency weed management. The FWP Noxious Weed Management Advisory Committee annually reviews Action Items contained within the Plan (see Charter in Appendix L). Parks Division Regional Implementation Plans were developed during FY09. Wildlife Bureau Plans will be developed in FY10/11.
- Conceptual framework has continued for developing a weed management page on the Fish, Wildlife and Parks website. When completed this webpage will include weed management reports and plans in Adobe PDF format in addition to links to other useful weed management websites.
- The Block Management Program pays approximately \$4 million annually to cooperating landowners. These payments are intended to offset hunter impacts on enrolled lands, including impacts associated with noxious weed management.

Through the Block Management Program, FWP potentially influences weed management on over eight million acres of Montana land enrolled in the program.

- Senate Bill 326, Section 26, authorized FWP to offer up to 5% in additional incentive payments to Block Management cooperators who agree to use those payments for specific weed management activities on lands under their control. For the 2008 (FY09) hunting season nearly 1,300 Block Management cooperators chose to receive the weed management payment. FY09 incentive payments totaled more than \$190,423. Much of this money is used as match funding for Noxious Weed Trust Fund grants for weed control projects in Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs) that are led by County Weed Districts.
- Fish, Wildlife and Parks staff professionalism and dedication to noxious weed management has been exemplified by their continued membership in the Montana Weed Control Association. Thirty-eight agency employees, including members of the Director's Office, took advantage of MWCA Group Membership opportunities in 2009. FWP further supported MWCA through the purchase of 2009 Directories and 2010 Calendars.
- In June 2009, four Helena and Regional FWP staff attended the Marias River Weed Tour and Float. This float tour incorporated presentations by FWP, BLM, BOR, and County Weed District staff. The float began approximately four miles inside the Marias River State Park and Wildlife Management Area boundary and ended on private land outside the east boundary of the property. Photos of the tour, taken by FWP staff, have been shared widely and many were included in the Montana Weed Control Association's summer issue of *The Weed Times*.
- FY09 was an exceptional year for biological control work by FWP staff. Region 1 Parks teamed up with Lincoln County Weed District to conduct 68 releases of the root-boring weevil, *Cyphocleonus acates*, on spotted knapweed. The critical funding provided by FWP for insect releases on FWP lands enhanced the ability of the county weed district to conduct releases throughout the region and in areas that were in dire need of knapweed management.
- Region 4 Wildlife staff also undertook a phenomenal biological control endeavor in FY09. In total, 132,800 biological control insects were released on Wildlife Management Areas across the region. This incredible undertaking will have perpetual positive impacts on FWP properties and adjacent private lands.
- Fish, Wildlife and Parks has continued to support the Montana Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness Campaign through purchase and funding of Campaign produced materials such as the annual Noxious Weed Calendar.
- Nearly 91,000 acres of FWP owned and managed land benefited from leased livestock grazing. Healthy rangelands can resist the establishment of noxious weeds.





**Photo 2: Gary Olsen, FWP Wildlife Biologist, explains the weed situation and management plans for the newly acquired Marias River State Park and Wildlife Management Area.**

## **Recreational Trails and Off-Highway Vehicle Grant Programs for Fiscal-Year 2009**

For FY09 \$1.2 million in federal funds were available through FWP Parks Division for Recreational Trails Projects (RTP). Grant project activities include the creation, completion, maintenance or renovation of recreational trails in Montana. Applicants are required to describe the pre-project status of weeds in the exact area proposed for the project and how monitoring and control of weeds will be conducted on the project area during and after construction. The sponsor must describe the weed status at the project site, what kind of weed encroachment the project might encourage, and what the sponsor proposes to do to stop weed encroachment. It is not enough to refer to County or Agency weed plans. Weed control costs on a project are legitimate trail costs and the sponsor may include these as part of the grant request. Exempted projects, such as ethics or safety education brochures and portable exhibits and displays, do not require a weed plan. The weed plan is valid for a period of two years for the purposes of a Recreational Trails Program grant application, if subsequent project proposals are identical.

Three RTP grants from FY09 were education-focused and therefore did not have to provide a weed plan as part of their application. These were the Gallatin NF, Lolo NF and Flathead Avalanche Centers avalanche training programs.

With these three exceptions, all other FY09 Recreational Trail and Off-Highway Vehicle grants awarded by FWP included weed control and/or inventory and totaled over \$1,200,000. The projects funded through the RTP for FY09 are listed in Table 1.

Off-Highway Vehicle Grant funds totaling \$160,000 were available through FWP for FY09. Historically, most of the grants have included funding for weed education and management. Those projects that specifically addressed weed management are included in Table 2.



**Table 1. FY09 Recreational Trails Program Grants**

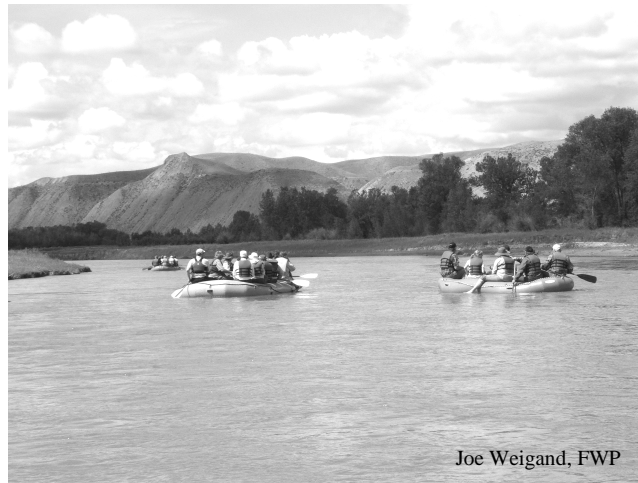
<b>Project Sponsor</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>
Beartooth Recreational Trails Association	Red Lodge Nordic Center Ski Trails	\$13,223
Bikenet	Earl Guss Park Trail & Main Street	\$24,598
Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation	Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex Trails	\$28,000
Bridger Ski Foundation Nordic/Biathlon	Gallatin Valley Nordic Ski Trails	\$16,000
Cabinet Ridge Riders	Groomed Trails System	\$15,340
Carbon County Board of County Commissioners	Airport Trail - Construction	\$24,273
Flathead County Parks & Recreation Dept.	Herron Park Renovation, Phase I	\$13,293
Flathead Snowmobile Assoc.	Groomed Trail Maintenance	\$28,800
Gallatin Valley Land Trust	Main Street to the Mountains	\$28,000
Grant Creek Trails Association	Grant Creek Trail	\$16,000
Great Falls Snowmobile Club	Grooming for Little Belts	\$16,581
Highland Cycling Club	Grading Camp Trail Reconstruction	\$18,918
Hill County	Bear Paw Nature Trail/Phase II	\$13,830
Kootenai Cross Country Ski Club	South Flower Grooming Replacement	\$19,999
Lewistown, City of	Lewistown Rails to Trails	\$31,280
MCC - Northern Rockies	Foys to Blacktail Trail	\$12,000
MCC/Bitterroot NF	West Fork RD- Flood Damaged Trails	\$24,168
Meagher County Little Belters	Winter Trail Grooming & Maintenance	\$16,000
Miles City, City of	Spotted Eagle Recreational Trails	\$21,268
Missoula Snowgoers Snowmobile Club	Trail Grooming Missoula/Garnet	\$35,000
Montana Natural History Center	Missoula Valley Interpretive Trail	\$27,918
Musselshell Valley Community Foundation	Roundup River Walk Heritage Trail	\$11,296
National Park Service	Bliss Pass Trail Restoration Project	\$18,908
North Shore Nordic Club	Blacktail Nordic & Foothills Nordic Ski	\$11,020
Polson School District	Linderman Loop Path	\$31,500
Prickly Pear Land Trust	Mt. Ascension Acquisition & Trail Work	\$29,737
Red Lodge, City of	Airport Trail - Interpretive	\$19,350
Sanders County	High Bridge Renovation - Thompson Falls	\$21,268
Sanders County Development Corporation	Thompson Falls Community Trails	\$28,268
Seeley Lake Nordic Ski Club	Purchase winter trail maintenance equipment	\$15,100
Shelby, City of	Roadrunner Recreation Trail	\$28,268
South 39th Street Neighborhood Council	Tonkin Trail	\$17,820
Summit Snowgoers	Skyland/Summit Snowmobile	\$13,400
Swan Ecosystem	Mission Mtns Wilderness & Swan	\$35,000
Three Forks, City of	Headwaters Trail System- Drouillard	\$21,268
Troy Snowmobile Club	Three Rivers District, Trail Improvement	\$31,410
University of Montana	Mount Sentinel Summit Trail	\$20,768
USDA, Flathead NF	Avalanche Awareness, Education	\$15,171
USDA, Flathead NF	Flathead Snow Ranger Program	\$27,500
USDA, Gallatin National Forest	Avalanche Education & Information	\$35,000
USDA, Gallatin NF, Gardiner RD	Cooke City Snowmobile Ranger	\$23,584
USDA, Gallatin NF, Hebgen Lake RD	Backcountry Trail Ranger	\$19,503

**Table 1. FY09 Recreational Trails Program Grants - Continued**

USDA, Gallatin NF, Livingston RD	Absaroka- Beartooth Wilderness & Crazy Mtn. Trail Rangers	\$19,220
USDA, Gallatin/Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF	Shared Snow Ranger Program	\$31,226
USDA, Kootenai NF, Cabinet RD	Gem Peak Saddle Trail Improvements	\$10,160
USDA, Lolo NF	West Central Avalanche Center	\$15,718
USDA, Lolo NF; Seeley Lake RD	Seeley Lake Snow Ranger Program	\$11,680
West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce	Hebgen Lake Basin Trail Groom	\$35,000
West Yellowstone Ski Education Foundation	Rendezvous Ski Trails Grooming	\$20,000
Yellowstone River Parks Association	Dutcher Trail through Riverfront Park	\$15,686
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,078,318</b>

**TABLE 2. FY 2009 Off Highway Vehicle Program Grants**

<b>Grant No.</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>
2009-01	Forest Service - Bitterroot National Forest	"Track the Tread"	\$15,000.00
2009-02	Forest Service - Dillon Ranger District	Motorized Trail Ranger Program	\$15,000.00
2009-03	Forest Service - Butte Ranger District	OHV Trail Ranger & Maintenance Program	\$16,000.00
2009-04	Gallatin National Forest	Gallatin NF OHV Backcountry Trail Rangers	\$24,000.00
2009-05	Wisdom/Wise River Ranger Districts	2008 OHV Trail Ranger	\$18,000.00
2009-06	Forest Service - Madison Ranger District	Madison District OHV Ranger	\$14,000.00
2009-07	Forest Service - Jefferson Ranger District	OHV Trail Ranger & Maintenance Program	\$15,000.00
2009-08	BLM - Butte Field Office	Trail Ranger	\$13,000.00
2009-09	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and MTVRA	On the Right Trail Ethics Education Program	\$15,000.00
2009-10	Big Sky Four Wheelers	Blacktail/Wild Bill National Recreation	\$3,000.00
2009-11	Montana Conservation Corps- Helena	Little Belt & Castle Mtn Trail Maintenance	\$12,000.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$160,000.00</b>



**Photo 3. Floaters enjoy the view of Marias River State Park and Wildlife Management Area during a June float coordinated by Pondera and Toole County Weed Districts.**

### **Sikes Act Projects**

The Sikes Act of 1974 (Public Law 92-452) is federal legislation that allows for memoranda of understanding between state fish and wildlife agencies and federal natural resource agencies to develop a funding source and partner in projects for the restoration and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat on public lands. In 1993, FWP developed agreements with the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management to cost-share, on a 50:50 basis, for habitat restoration and improvements on public lands. Projects are frequently funded that have a strong weed management component, which in turn improves fish and wildlife habitat.

**Table 3: FWP Sikes Act dollars spent on noxious weed management projects in FY09.**

<b>Project Location</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>FWP Sikes Act Funding</b>
Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest	Tobacco Root Houndstongue Management	\$2,400
Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest	Stucky Ridge Weed Management	\$10,000
Custer National Forest	Ekalaka Hills Weed Management	\$5,000
Gallatin/Custer National Forests	Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness Weed Management	\$4,200
Helena National Forest	Elkhorns Weed Management	\$2,500
Flathead National Forest	Spotted Bear Weed Management	\$4,000
Flathead National Forest	Coal Creek Knapweed Management	\$2,000
Flathead National Forest	Fielding Meadow Knapweed Management	\$4,000
<b>Total FWP Funding</b>		<b>\$34,100</b>

## **FAS Internship**

In 2004, the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) initiated evaluation of weed infestations on a number of Fishing Access Sites and State Parks. To follow up on this effort, FWP and MDA have since teamed up annually to fund an intern to continue the evaluations. The purpose of this endeavor has been to objectively evaluate the effectiveness of noxious weed control activities at these high public-use sites and concurrently document the current level of weed infestation on and adjacent to the sites.

Each summer an intern has been hired and trained through MDA. The intern works cooperatively with FWP regional staff to identify and locate Fishing Access Sites and State Parks for evaluation. The standardized methodology and forms provided through MDA's weed professionals provide simple and accurate evaluation of weed infestations at FWP sites visited. This valuable joint venture will likely continue in 2010 with the intent to carry on evaluations until trends and management recommendations can be determined.



**Photo 4. Contracted herbicide application at Dearborn FAS.**

## **FWP Land Acquisition – Weed Inspection and Report Form**

In order to make sure that FWP land acquisitions conform to 7-22-2154, MCA, (enacted in 2005), Hugh Zacheim developed the field form included in Appendix M. This form is to be completed prior to any new fee acquisition by FWP (the law does provide a 6-month grace period when a land acquisition takes place during the winter). The lead Lands Unit staff person on a project will remind/inform the appropriate field staff that the property must be inspected for noxious weeds by the county weed management district, and Lands will provide an electronic copy of this form. It will then be the responsibility of the field staff person (fish, wildlife or parks) to set up the site inspection with the county weed management district; to make sure that the inspection is conducted and the form is completed; and to submit the completed form to the Lands staff for inclusion in our permanent file. In most cases, it will be necessary for the FWP field staff to accompany the county weed district

representative to help with site access and to make sure the inspection and report cover the land that FWP will be acquiring.

### **Noxious Weed Management Advisory Committee**

With completion of the Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan, the FWP Noxious Weed Management Advisory Committee will look at new weed management issues including tracking trends in weed densities on FWP properties and the effectiveness of contracted and in-house herbicide application. The Committee is also charged with annually reviewing the action items contained within the Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan. The current Charter for this committee is provided in Appendix L.



**Photo 5: Giant Springs State Park 2009 Weed Pull.**

### **Coordinator Update**

Fiscal Year 2009 proved to be a very busy and involved year in weed management. As such, coordinator activities and projects consumed a significant portion of the available project budget. The MWCA 2009 Conference was well attended by FWP staff and the coordinator organized a subsequent half-day discussion on implementing the FWP statewide weed management plan. Most FWP staff that attended the annual conference also attended this discussion. FWP coordinator participation on the MWCA Board of Directors has continued with attendance of the annual meetings plus a spring retreat. MWCA Spring and Fall Coordinator Trainings were also attended. The FWP coordinator has maintained an active role on the Executive Board of the Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign. In addition to these annual responsibilities the coordinator attended the Governor's Noxious Weed Summit Advisory Council and participated in discussions regarding proposed all-encompassing invasive species legislation for the State of Montana. Parks Division personnel across the state as well as headquarters staff and the statewide weed coordinator assisted the Legislative Audit Division with gathering information for the Fishing Access Site and State Parks Weed Management Program Audit. The audit resulted in recommendations to FWP to help improve specific areas of the weed management

program. Detailed results of the audit are available upon request from the Legislative Audit Division (444-3122).

### **Targeted Grazing Update**

Fish, Wildlife and Parks recognizes the use of domestic livestock as a valuable tool for managing noxious weeds. As such, FWP utilizes domestic livestock where appropriate on property owned and managed by the agency.

Because of the increasing popularity of this weed management tool, FWP along with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies have developed guidelines for proper use of targeted grazing and avoiding wildlife conflicts. With overwhelming evidence that disease transmission from domestic sheep and goats to bighorn sheep is likely to result in subsequent mass die-off of the latter, FWP has particular interest in, and concerns about, grazing domestic sheep and goats in the vicinity of bighorn sheep. The FWP Bighorn Sheep Management Guidelines detail these concerns along with recommended management practices.

To address potential bighorn-domestic sheep/goat contact, FWP has formulated the following policy.

#### **Situation 1**

Because a quick response to a situation where commingling occurs is critical, FWP personnel will respond immediately when the person(s) reporting confirmed or suspected contact is available to further assist or when sufficient information has been obtained for an immediate field response. The following actions will occur:

- 1) Field personnel need to respond as quickly as possible to reports of bighorns commingling with domestic sheep and goats.
- 2) When it is confirmed that bighorns have made contact with domestics, the bighorn(s) must be lethally removed and promptly sent to the Wildlife Laboratory in Bozeman or a field necropsy performed by a trained biologist. When feasible, the lab should be contacted prior to removing the animal. This will allow the lab to prepare for necropsy and analysis of the carcass soon after it arrives. If the carcass is being transported to the lab, it should be done immediately (as soon as the animal is killed). As a last resort the carcass can be frozen. Information that should accompany a removed animal includes the name of the person who made the removal, the time and place of the removal, an explanation of the reason for the action, and a description of symptoms, if any, of the euthanized sheep.
- 3) If contact with domestics is not certain (e.g., a bighorn was observed in the area but may not have made contact), some discretion can be allowed in the field as to what action to take. However, if there is reasonable suspicion that contact likely occurred, the animal should be immediately dispatched.
- 4) If bighorns are using pastures common to domestic sheep and goats, every effort should be made to discourage animals from commingling. This is

especially true in situations where bighorns are just beginning to move onto cultivated lands where contact with domestics could occur over time.

5) There may be situations where extenuating circumstances may dictate different action from that listed above. In these situations, there needs to be agreement between field staff and regional managers as to the action taken.

## Situation 2

In situations where communication via cell phone or other timely communication is not possible, such as in remote country with no phone coverage, a signed agreement with the producer will facilitate the following actions.

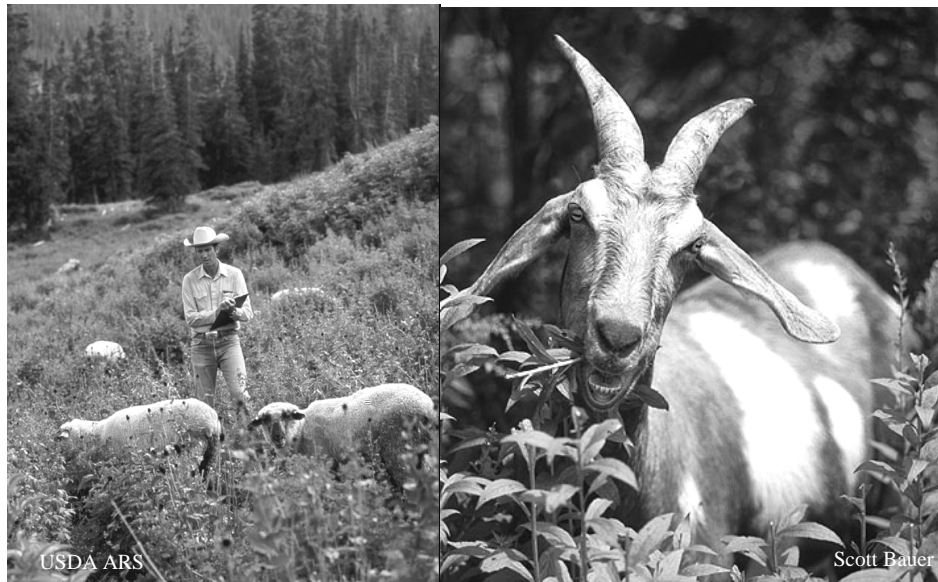
- 1) Any bighorn sheep contacting domestic sheep may be lethally removed by the producer or their herders on their federal and/or state managed allotments or on private and leased land.
- 2) Bighorns close to domestic sheep within the same lands/situations as above, where potential for contact is imminent, may be lethally removed by the producer or their herders.
- 3) When bighorns are greater than half a mile from domestic sheep and goats on these same lands/situations, producers or their herders will make every effort to contact FWP personnel, haze the bighorns, or move domestic animals to address the situation before lethally removing bighorn sheep.
- 4) Producers or their herders will inform FWP within 24 hours of lethally removing a bighorn sheep or as soon as practical thereafter, considering access and logistic limitations.
- 5) The carcass of any bighorn sheep lethally removed as described above will be field dressed and preserved in as practical a manner as circumstances allow, to prevent spoilage.
- 6) The carcass, including the head and horns, will be left intact for collection by FWP.
- 7) The person killing a bighorn is required to take an FWP representative to the location of the kill. In all situations where commingling has occurred and bighorn sheep have been lethally removed, FWP and/or the producer or their herder will continue to monitor the area to determine if there are more bighorn sheep. Likewise, if contact has not occurred but sheep are in the vicinity of domestic sheep and goats, bighorn sheep distribution will be closely monitored and bighorns may be hazed from the area. When possible, domestic animals will be removed from the vicinity to prevent contact from occurring.

In addition to appropriate livestock grazing management related to bighorn sheep, FWP is also concerned about the increased use of domestic sheep and goats in areas that are occupied by “top tier” predators such as mountain lion, grizzly bear, black bear, and wolves. The potential exists for introducing an unnatural and easy to acquire food source into the predator’s environment, which could result in lethal removal of numerous depredating predators. Livestock producers, wildlife managers, and weed management professionals alike should consider depredation of livestock resulting in subsequent lethal removal of



depredating predators, resulting from situations that could have been foreseen and avoided, unacceptable.

Essentially, widespread use of domestic livestock for weed management under the wrong conditions can result in negative impacts to wildlife rather than benefiting wildlife under the guise of habitat improvement. Fish, Wildlife and Parks hopes to facilitate widespread publication and implementation of “best management practices” that encourage the proper use of targeted grazing for weed management that benefits the range and wildlife resources of Montana to the fullest extent possible.



**Photo 6: Domestic sheep and goat grazing can be valuable weed management tools when applied appropriately.**

## CONCLUSION

FWP owns and manages less than one-half of one percent of all lands in Montana, yet spends over half of a million dollars annually, not including staff time, for weed management on FWP-owned and managed land. In addition to the nearly \$816,850 spent directly on FWP department weed management activities in FY09, a total of nearly four million in sportsmen’s dollars is provided annually to private landowners through the Block Management Program for use in farm and ranch operations, which may include weed management activities. In FY09, FWP paid an additional \$190,423 in Block Management Weed Incentive Payments to cooperators for private land weed control. The Sikes Act resulted in \$34,100 in FWP funds being matched with federal funds for habitat improvements and weed management on federal lands in Montana.

In addition to FWP funding sources, more than one million dollars in federal trails and off-highway vehicle project grant funding were available through FWP in FY09. Federal trails projects require weed management plans to be in place and frequently include a weed control component.

The dedication of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to control and manage noxious weeds in Montana is evident in its integrated management and contributions to the cause. Thousands of biological control insect collections and releases have taken place on FWP lands, which benefit adjacent landowners as well. However, it is the individual efforts of Department personnel that truly have the “on-the-ground” impact. The experience and knowledge of these individuals must be maintained within the ranks so that ground gained is not lost as veteran land-managers hand over responsibility to up-and-coming managers. Expertise, coordination, and budgets must all come together to continue the Department’s noxious weed management success. Additionally, FWP professionals must recognize the critical role that they play to help other weed managers recognize and address both positive and negative potential impacts resulting from weed management practices.



Joe Weigand, FWP

**Photo 7: Grizzly bear track observed on Marias River State Park and Wildlife Management Area during a June weed tour/float.**

## APPENDIX A

### FY09 Weed Management Summary

## APPENDIX B

### FY08 Weed Management Summary

## APPENDIX C

### Region 1 – FY09 Weed Management Report

## APPENDIX D

### Region 2 – FY09 Weed Management Report

## APPENDIX E

### Region 3 – FY09 Weed Management Report



## APPENDIX F

### Region 4 – FY09 Weed Management Report

## APPENDIX G

### Region 5 – FY09 Weed Management Report

## APPENDIX H

### Region 6 – FY09 Weed Management Report

## APPENDIX I

### Region 7 – FY09 Weed Management Report

## APPENDIX J

### FY 2009 Parks Division Weed Budget & Expenditures (SABHRS)

**FY09 PARKS DIVISION  
WEED MANAGEMENT REPORTS VERSUS SABRS DATA**

- Weed reports provided by regional staff likely do not include all salaries/benefits paid to FWP staff for weed control. Regional report also might not include capital expenses.
- SABRS lumps many personal services and travel expenses under one org number for region-wide weed control making it difficult to assess the expenditures to each state park. This allows flexibility in using budgeted funds at the region level but makes accounting difficult.
- SABRS includes capital expenditures by region, which makes it difficult to assess expenditures to specific state parks. This allows flexibility in using budgeted funds at the region level but makes accounting difficult.
- Providing year-end SABRS reports to each region will be phased in when requests for weed report information goes out to regional staff. This will allow staff to be more consistent on where region-wide weed funds and where capital funds were expended.
- Inclusion of personal service costs (salary and benefits), travel costs, etc. will also be phased in where possible to more closely balance the annual weed management reports and SABRS report.

## APPENDIX K

### Montana Weed Laws and Regulations



# Montana Weed Laws and Regulations

(Summarized from 2008 Montana Weed Management Plan)

The first noxious weed legislation in Montana was passed in 1939. Since that time, additional laws and rules have been enacted to strengthen weed management efforts. The eight laws currently affecting weed management in Montana are summarized below and described in detail in Appendix F.

The Montana State Noxious Weed list is updated as needed and is determined by Rule of the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) under the provisions of the Montana County Weed Control Act. Changes or additions are based on advice and recommendations from the Montana Noxious Weed List Advisory Committee. The Committee reviews requests for additions to the list received by the MDA, using established criteria, and makes recommendations to the Director of the MDA. Weeds on federal and regional weed lists are reviewed for inclusion on the Montana state list based on their potential to invade and spread within the state.

Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) administers a number of laws relating to weed management in the state.

**Section 7-22-2151 of the Montana County Weed Control Act** requires that any state agency controlling land within a district enter into a written agreement with the board. The agreement must specify mutual responsibilities for integrated noxious weed management on state-owned or state-controlled. The plan must include: a 6-year integrated weed management plan, to be updated biennially; a noxious weeds goals statement; and a specific plan of operations for each biennium, including a budget. Each agency is required to submit a biennial performance report to the Montana Department of Agriculture. These provisions were enacted by the 1995 Montana Legislature, and MDA is currently working with agencies and counties to facilitate implementation. State agencies with weed management responsibilities are: Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; Department of Transportation; Department of Corrections; Department of Public Health & Human Services; and the University System.

**The Montana Weed Control Act (Title 80, Chapter 7 Part 7)** provides for technical assistance, funding of noxious plant management programs, and embargoes. Section 80-7-712 MCA allows the Montana Department of Agriculture to obtain federal funds and disburse funds to local governments authorized to conduct noxious plant management programs. In addition, Section 80-7-720 MCA provides for the following regarding biological agents for weed control: (1) the department of agriculture is authorized to expend funds for the collection and distribution of biological agents to control leafy spurge and spotted knapweed. The project will reduce energy consumption by reducing the need for repeated chemical application. (2) The department of natural resources and conservation is authorized to administratively transfer funds to the department of agriculture for the project described in subsection (1).

**The Montana Noxious Weed Seed-Free Forage Act** establishes a state noxious weed seed free forage and mulch certification program used by individuals, agencies, and private corporations on public and private lands. The Montana program supports and complements the regional North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) Noxious Weed Seed-Free Forage Certification Program. This program provides forage products that are free of regionally-designated noxious weeds seeds or any injurious portions of plants and any propagating parts of plants that are capable of producing new plants.

**The Montana Agricultural Seed Act** lists prohibited and restricted seed levels that must be maintained in state certified seed. All state noxious weeds are included in this list.

**The Montana Commercial Feed Act** prohibits noxious weeds in commercial feed.

**The Montana Nursery Law** allows for inspection, certification, and embargo of all nursery stock for listed pests, including weeds.

**The Montana Environmental Policy Act** must be addressed by all MDA actions that have potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts.

**The Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund Act** is a grant-funding program designed to encourage local cooperative weed management programs, creative research in weed control, including the development of biological control methods, and educational programs. The MDA is responsible for weed supervisor training standards and listing of statewide noxious weeds by rule under the Montana County Weed Control Act. Revenue for the current grants program comes from interest from the \$4.76 million Trust and from the vehicle weed fee of \$1.50 per vehicle. Annual revenue from these two sources varies with current interest rates and averages between \$1.2 and \$1.7 million. In addition to the interest, the Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) receives \$101,337 annually from the Montana General Fund (these funds were redirected in 2003 from FWP general fund to the Department of Agriculture general fund), and in 2004, a grant of \$100,000 from the Natural Resource Conservation Service. Since 2001, \$830,000 annually has been provided to the NWTF from USDA Cooperative Forestry Assistance to manage weed infestations on Private, tribal and non-federal public lands having at least 10% tree cover.

## APPENDIX L

### Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Noxious Weed Management Advisory Committee Charter

## **FWP NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **Statement of Need:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) owns, leases, or manages over 500 sites across the state and is responsible for noxious weed management on approximately 400,000 acres of land. Managed sites include 50 state parks, 320 fishing access sites, 109 wildlife management areas, and more than 40 administrative sites, fish hatcheries, etc.

By its nature, noxious weed management impacts a wide spectrum of public resources and recreational interests. Weed management is inherently programmatic and touches virtually every aspect of the agency in some respect. Management actions and decisions must recognize the potential for controversy and involve a broad spectrum of agency and public interests.

### **The Mission:**

The mission of the Noxious Weed Management (NWM) Advisory Committee is to provide interdisciplinary coordination and review for noxious weed management on Department owned and managed lands.

### **Team Goals:**

- 1) Help ensure that FWP noxious weed management is compatible with both the overall mission of FWP and the Montana Weed Management Plan.
- 2) Provide balance and consistency in the noxious weed management program by addressing the need for integrated management across Division and Administrative Region boundaries.
- 3) Be proactive in resolving controversy associated with Department noxious weed management.
- 4) Ensure that appropriate interest groups are effectively involved in the FWP noxious weed management decision process.

### **Team Resources:**

Field Services will coordinate and provide support for NWM Advisory Committee meetings and locations, and support development of the Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan (the Team's initial task). Team members are responsible for providing fiscal support for meeting attendance, including travel and lodging when necessary, and individual effort for tasks associated with completing Team goals.

### **Team Authority and Duration:**

The Team is both advisory and decision making in nature. Due to the multi-disciplinary composition of the Team, the Team Leader seeks to maintain integrated management action across disciplines.

The Team is chartered for Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010 to ensure specific task completion. The need for the Team will be reviewed upon completion of the specific delineated tasks and may be continued with existing or new members and assignments in FY 2009.

### **Team Oversight:**

The Chief of Staff and Chief of Operations shall serve as Team Sponsors. The Sponsors will act as a resource, providing policy input to the Team's work. The Sponsors will also provide a quick method of resolving problems or obtaining additional support.

The Field Services Division Administrator is responsible for oversight of the Team and its work. He is not a team member, but will function as the "Coach" for the group and will be responsible for the team's success. The Coach will serve as the interface between the Team and Sponsors to resolve problems and facilitate solutions.

### **Team Membership and Roles:**

In recognition of the Team's programmatic emphasis, membership will be broad-spectrum in nature. All programs and various specific disciplines will be represented.

The Team will be composed of Helena Headquarters and Region based representatives from Communication and Education, Enforcement, Field Services, Fisheries, Legal Unit, Parks, and Wildlife. Each Division and Region will be represented by at least, but not limited to, one member. Additional membership from stakeholders is welcome and will be periodically solicited.

The Landowner/Wildlife Resource Specialist will serve as Statewide Weed Management Coordinator and the Team Leader. The Team Leader will be responsible for calling meetings, facilitating Team discussions, tracking Team tasks and accomplishments, and will also be responsible for coordination and liaison with affected work units as necessary.

Refer to the attached list for names and positions of current team members.

### **Team Operating Procedures:**

The Team will meet as necessary to accomplish assigned tasks. The Team may establish sub-committees or individual staff assignments within the scope of their authority and resources.

The Team will make decisions by consensus when possible. If the committee cannot reach agreement, alternative points of view will be defined for resolution or decisions by higher authorities.

### **Specific Assignments and Expected Products:**

The Noxious Weed Management Advisory Committee is expected to:

1. Coordinate and facilitate implementation of the “FWP Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan;”
2. Act as Regional and Division representatives during annual review of the “Plan;”
3. Review the “Montana Weed Management Plan” and determine how well FWP is doing statewide to fulfill the stated goals and objectives (This will be critical for identifying issues that need to be addressed in the FWP Plan); and
4. Improve consistency in reporting forms and county agreements.
5. Monitor agency weed management success and facilitate improvements in areas identified as needing improvement.

Tasks with an end product will be completed in a timely manner. Annual review of the Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan and action items contained therein will be completed by June 30, annually.

### **Noxious Weed Management Advisory Committee Members (As of 12/01/09):**

<u>Member</u>	<u>Representing – Position/Title</u>
Paul Sihler	FWP Field Services – Administrator (Coach)
Joe Weigand	FWP Wildlife – Private Lands Wildlife Specialist (Team Leader)
Steve Knapp	FWP Wildlife – Habitat Bureau Chief
Allan Kuser	FWP Parks – Fishing Access Site Coordinator
Dianne Tipton	FWP Communication and Education Statewide Information Officer
John Grant	FWP Region 1 Wildlife – Wildlife Area Manager
Mike Hathaway	FWP Region 2 Parks – Parks Specialist
Dave Dziak	FWP Region 2 Wildlife – Wildlife Area Manager
Fred King	FWP Region 3 Wildlife – Wildlife Area Manager
Matt Marcinek	FWP Region 4 Parks – Park Manager
Cleve Schuster	FWP Region 5 Parks – Park Maintenance Supervisor
B.J. Kemp	FWP Region 6 Department Administration – Conservation Specialist
Dwayne Andrews	FWP Region 7 Comm. Ed. – Regional Info. and Ed. Program Manager
Celestine Duncan	Weed Management Services – Consultant
Dave Burch	Montana Department of Agriculture – State Weed Coordinator
Scott Bockness	Montana Weed Control Association – Past-President
Jim Freeman	County Weed District Representative – Cascade County (Retired)

## APPENDIX M

### FWP Land Acquisition – Weed Inspection and Report

FWP Land Acquisition – Weed Inspection and Report

**COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST FOR SECTION 7-22-2154, MCA**

*FWP Regional Staff: Please return this form to  
FWP Lands Bureau, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620*

Property Name: \_\_\_\_\_ FWP Region: \_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Property Inspection with County Weed Management District: \_\_\_\_\_

County Representative(s): \_\_\_\_\_

FWP Staff: \_\_\_\_\_

County Weed Management District - Inspection Report (Please attach weed inspection report or use the space below to describe noxious weeds present on the property, including observations of weed distribution and abundance):

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Noxious Weed Management Agreement (Please attach applicable weed management agreement or use the space below to indicate how noxious weeds on the property will be managed when the property is under FWP ownership. Indicate if property will be included in an FWP county or regional weed management plan):

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County Weed Management District Representative: I have inspected the property, and reviewed the weed situation with a representative of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I concur with FWP's weed management plan for the property, as presented above and/or described in the attached information.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_